

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

CU-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 HA-05 IO-13 AID-05 /090 W

-----116953 220105Z /73

R 210230Z APR 78

FM AMCONSUL MEDAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 859

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL SURABAYA 635

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDAN 0133

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID, SOPN

SUBJECT: STUDENT DETAINEES IN NORTH SUMATRA

REF: MEDAN 0083

1. IN POLL OF VARIOUS POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN MEDAN, CONSULATE HAS FOUND CONFLICTING FIGURES ON THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS STILL UNDER DETENTION. ALL SEEM TO AGREE, HOWEVER, ON APPROXIMATELY TEN AS THE NUMBER RELEASED SO FAR. THE STUDENTS DETAINED HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH SUMATRA, BUT ALSO FROM THE TEACHERS' COLLEGE (IKIP), CUT NYAK DIN UNIVERSITY, THE CHRISTIAN BATAK NOMENSEN UNIVERSITY, THE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF NORTH SUMATRA (IUSU), AND THE NATIONAL ISLAMIC INSTITUTE (IAIN). MOST OF THOSE RELEASED STILL HAVE TO REPORT DAILY TO LAKSUS, THE REGIONAL SECURITY COMMAND, AND MOST HAVE MADE THEMSELVES SCARCE TO ANYONE WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR DETENTION. THE MALAYSIAN CONSULATE MAINTAINS THAT A FEW OF THE STUDENTS WERE RELEASED EVEN BEFORE THE MPR SESSION.

2. LOCAL INDONESIANS SUCH AS THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY MIMBAR UMUM AND THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH SUMATRA PUT THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS STILL UNDER DETENTION AT SIX TO EIGHT. BUT
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OTHER SOURCES CONSIDERED RELIABLE BY THE CONSULATE PUT

THE FIGURE HIGHER, AT 13-14. AMONG THOSE STUDENTS STILL BEING HELD ARE THE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH SUMATRA STUDENT COUNCIL. THREE OF THE DETAINEES HAVE REQUESTED LEGAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED MEDAN BRANCH OF THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY.

3. AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE INTERROGATION OF THE STUDENTS, THE MAJORITY OF WHOM HAVE BEEN MUSLIMS, EMPHASIZE THE EFFORT OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO IDENTIFY THEM WITH THE ILLEGAL MUSLIM EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS SUCH AS COMMANDO JIHAD OR ACEH MERDEKA. THE AUTHORITIES ALSO APPEAR ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH WHEREVER POSSIBLE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STUDENT LEADERS AND THE MOSLEM UNITED DEVELOPMENT PARTY (PPP).

4. THE RECTOR OF THE NORTH SUMATRA ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY (IUSU), JUSUF RANGKUTI, IS ALSO STILL UNDER DETENTION AND REPORTEDLY WILL BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL ON A COMMANDO JIHAD RELATED CHARGE.

5. ACCORDING TO THE MALAYSIAN CONSULATE, THE HEAD OF THE NORTH SUMATRA HMI (HIMPUNAN MAHASISWA ISLAM) HAS BEEN STEADILY INTERROGATED EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST THREE WEEKS BY THE MILITARY AUDITOR'S OFFICE. THIS IS A SECTION OF KOWILHAN, THE TERRITORIAL COMMAND WHICH WE UNDERSTAND NORMALLY HANDLES MILITARY DISCIPLINE CASES BUT WHICH ALSO HAS BEEN INVOLVED RECENTLY IN BROADER CASES SUCH AS OPERATION ORDER OR OPSTIB INVESTIGATIONS. AGAIN, THE THRUST OF THE QUESTIONS TO HIM IS TO TRY TO DISCERN AN EXTREMIST MUSLIM LINK.

6. THE MALAYSIANS REPORT IN ADDITION THAT A KODAM II, (PROVINCIAL COMMAND) MILITARY OFFICER, COL. MURAD HASYIM, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ASSISTANT FOR TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS TO THE KODAM II COMMANDER, IS UNDER HOUSE ARREST FOR INVESTIGATION INTO HIS ALLEGED TIES TO MOSLEM GROUPS.

7. COMMENT: WE HAVE BEEN SURPRISED THAT ONCE THE MPR SESSION WAS OVER THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES DID NOT RELEASE VIRTUALLY ALL THE STUDENTS DETAINED, GIVEN THE GENERALLY LACKLUSTER NATURE OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN NORTH SUMATRA AND ITS CONSEQUENT FAILDRE TO REPRESENT A REAL THREAT TO THE GOVERNMENT. IT WOULD APPEAR FROM THE INTERROGATIONS THAT THE AUTHORITIES REMAIN DETERMINED TO MAKE USE OF THE DETAINEES AS PART OF A GENERAL EFFORT TO DISCREDIT THE MUSLIMS THROUGH CHARGES OF INDIVIDUAL CONNECTIONS, PERHAPS FABRICATED IF NECESSARY, TO COMMANDO JIHAD OR OTHER EXTREMIST/ACTIVITIES. COL. MURAD, FOR INSTANCE, IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN FRAMED IN THIS CONTEXT BECAUSE HE RAN AFOUL OF THE NEW PROVINCE COMMANDER, GENERAL ISMAIL, WHO LIKES STRICTLY "YES" MEN AROUND HIM. WE DOUBT, TOO, THAT RANGKUTI'S "CRIME" WAS ANYTHING MORE THAN HIS UNUSUALLY BOLD PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, DATA, STUDENTS, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MEDAN00133
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780171-1006
Format: TEL
From: MEDAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780431/aaaabaai.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9318efa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MEDAN 83
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2893337
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STUDENT DETAINEES IN NORTH SUMATRA
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SOPN, ID
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9318efa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014